

**Low-Income Student Persistence to Timely Graduation
As a Function of the Academic Experience
Grant Proposal Addendum**

Utilizing a synthesis of retention, behavioral and self-efficacy theories as the framework for the research, this study aims to build on and contribute to research about the persistence and timely graduation of economically disadvantaged university students. Expected outcomes include the identification of variables that correlate with academic underachievement and attrition among low-income students, and the development of a predictive model informing higher education about the factors of timely graduation.

The scope of the research will be broad: data will be collected from three large, public universities for comparison and analysis of the persistence and timely graduation of their low-income freshmen participating in nationally catalogued access and success programs at each institution. Each of the three programs is included in the Lumina compendium of “Institutional Initiatives to Improve Access for Low to Moderate Income Students,” (2nd ed., 2007). Preliminary data has been collected from the University of North Carolina’s Covenant Scholars program and the University of Florida’s Opportunity Scholars program. Dr. Shirley Ort and Ann Trollinger of UNC, and Karen Fooks of UF are current contacts for the researchers. Collaboration on analyses and data-sharing among the three institutions will continue for the duration of the CERPP study and beyond.

Each institution has developed and implemented a robust access and success program and are all operating at different phases of development. The Emerald Eagle Scholars program at UNT (total enrollment 34,000 students) is in its inaugural year; the Florida Opportunity Scholars program is serving its second cohort of freshmen, and the Carolina Covenant is in its fourth year and is the most mature program. This broad distribution of experiences with and perspectives on access and success programs aims to provide other comprehensive, strategic findings and timely contributions to the literature about access, success, and timely graduation of low income students.